



CPC Pleased with Standing Committee Report on International Market Access

May 9, 2017 (Ottawa, ON) The Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry released its report on international market access for the agriculture and agri-food sector today. The report, *Market Access: Giving Canadian Farmers and Processors the World*, follows meetings with over 500 witnesses and other stakeholders from across Canada, including the Canadian Pork Council (CPC).

“We are a sector that relies on exports,” Rick Bergmann, a hog producer from Steinbach, Man. and Chair of the CPC’s Board of Directors, told the committee during CPC’s presentation. “In fact, more than two thirds of the hogs produced in Canada are exported as either live hogs or pork products. Market access is not only vital to our industry, it is a fact of life. I know it is important to point out that our success in accessing existing foreign markets is directly linked to the level of cooperation between government and industry.”

Bergmann acknowledged CPC's recognition that opening or maintaining market access is never easy, but pointed out it must be a priority for government departments like Global Affairs Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

“These departments need the flexibility and a full team with the financial backing to address market access issues,” he said. “Through all trade negotiations, the CPC maintains that Canada needs to be at the negotiating table, especially with high value markets in Asia. Countries like Japan, and the ever-growing demand for food imports in China, are a significant opportunity for Canadian pork producers.

“It's important for Canada to take every opportunity to secure favourable terms of access to foreign markets, including through new, or expanding existing, trade agreements,” he added, pointing to Canada’s participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Canada-European Union Trade Agreement as examples.

The CPC is particularly pleased with the following recommendations in the report:

- That the federal government eliminate non-tariff barriers to trade and pursue free trade agreements with other countries
- The establishment of a more efficient dispute resolution body under the World Trade Organization
- Federal and provincial collaboration of a comprehensive market strategy program that reinforces the Canada brand
- Improving access to infrastructure grants for farmers and food processors who want to invest in new technologies and that Employment and Social Development Canada and Immigration and Citizenship Canada create programs that help hire foreign workers to address labour shortages

“We certainly like what we see,” said Bergmann following the report’s release today. “A number of the recommendations are areas that the pork industry believes the government should focus its attention to further strengthen the sector and expand markets.”

Canada’s pork industry produces more than 25.5 million animals a year. It creates 31,000 farm jobs which, in turn, contribute to 103,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs across the country. Those jobs generate \$23.8 billion when farms, inputs, processing and pork exports are factored in. In 2016, the pork industry exported over 1 million tonnes of pork and pork products, valued at over \$3.2 billion, to 90 countries.

The CPC serves as the national voice for hog producers in Canada. A federation of nine provincial pork industry associations, the organization's purpose is to play a leadership role in achieving and maintaining a dynamic and prosperous Canadian pork sector.

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